

# Aral Sea Case Study Research

IB Standard: 3.6.2 *Describe and evaluate the sustainability of freshwater resource usage with reference to a case study. Specifically:*



*Irrigation, industrialization and population increase all make demands on the supplies of fresh water. Global warming may disrupt rainfall patterns and water supplies. The hydrological cycle supplies humans with fresh water but we are withdrawing water from underground aquifers and degrading it with wastes at a greater rate than it can be replenished. Consider the increased demand for fresh water, inequity of usage and political consequences, methods of reducing use and increasing supplies. A case study must be explored that covers some of these issues and demonstrates either sustainable or unsustainable water use.*

Imagine standard 3.6.2 above is an extended exam question. You are going to plan your response under the following headings using the Aral Sea as your case study:

1. Background information: (the area, the issue).
2. Causes of the Aral Sea shrinking.
3. Impacts of the Aral Sea shrinking: consider – environmental impacts, health impacts, economic impacts and political impacts.
4. Responses to the issue / link in concept of sustainability.

## Some resources:

- YouTube has many useful videos – just search ‘Aral Sea’ e.g.  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NC5UIEx83fo&safety\\_mode=true&persist\\_safety\\_mode=1&safe=active](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NC5UIEx83fo&safety_mode=true&persist_safety_mode=1&safe=active)
- Environmental impacts:  
<http://www.columbia.edu/~tmt2120/environmental%20impacts.htm>
- Facts and background:  
<http://www.unep.org/dewa/vitalwater/article115.html>
- General info: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/678898.stm>
- NASA:  
[http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/WorldOfChange/aral\\_sea.php](http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/WorldOfChange/aral_sea.php)
- <http://www.aralsea.org/>
- <http://news.nationalgeographic.co.uk/news/2010/04/100402-aral-sea-story/>
- Impacts on human health:  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/3846843.stm>